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SUBJECT: EGYPT MEDIA TRENDS AUGUST 13, 2006

Ref: Cairo 04918

¶1. Summary. The day's headlines largely focused on the UNSC resolution, its potential for implementation on Monday, and Israel's planning of large military campaigns in anticipation. In breaking news, during their afternoon press conference following a meeting with President Mubarak, Iranian Foreign Minister Mottaki and Egyptian Foreign Minister Aboul-Gheit did not publicly divulge their discussions about Hezbollah, but did address a ceasefire in Lebanon and Iran's nuclear program. Government-controlled daily Rose Al-Youssef announced over the weekend that a Lebanese journalist known to speak against Hezbollah will become a regular contributor. In the commentaries, writers reacted against President Bush's use of the term, "Islamic Fascists". End Summary.

¶2. In the headlines and front pages. The potential for a ceasefire and Israel's continuing operations dominated the banner headlines. For example, in leading government-controlled daily Al-Ahram, with similar words in government-controlled daily Al-Akhbar, "Israel is Defying International Legitimacy by Expanding its Brutal Attacks on Lebanon." Sub-headlines explained that Israel is "heading toward acceptance" of the resolution while, at the same time, it "assembles 30,000 soldiers for land attacks." Small circulation opposition papers sensationalized Israel's position with headlines such as Al-Wafd's "Israel Surrenders: The Enemy Loses the War after Thirty Days," and Al-Ahrar's "Israel Refuses to End the War." Also, Egypt's call for Israel to "...commit to an Immediate Ceasefire" was highlighted in government-controlled dailies, Al-Akhbar and Al-Gomhouriya, while independent dailies, Al-Masry Al-Yom and Nahdet Masr provided Foreign Minister Aboul-Gheit's demands for "full withdrawal" and "investigations into massacres" as "conditions for political settlement." Foreign Minister Aboul-Gheit's statement to the Middle East News Agency is available on opensource.gov.

¶3. Breaking News. Iranian Foreign Minister Mottaki and Egyptian Foreign Minister Aboul-Gheit gave an afternoon press conference following Minister Mottaki's meeting with President Mubarak. As reported by the Middle East News Agency, both sides agreed that there should be an immediate ceasefire in Lebanon, an Israeli withdrawal from occupied territories and swift deployment of UNIFIL forces. Minister Mottaki said that Iran would respect any decision of the Government of Lebanon and the will of the Lebanese people. As for the nuclear issue, he said that "the U.S. accusations toward Iran are natural as the U.S. believes only it can have nuclear weapons. The people of the region will not accept this nor will they accept being told what to do. The U.S. has learned this lesson." Minister Aboul-Gheit said that Egypt is "not taking any mediation role" in this matter and its position "in favor of non-proliferation" is widely known. He also said, "People have the right to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes." According to Minister Aboul-Gheit, "The Iranian Foreign Minister listened to President Mubarak's vision about how to get out of the Lebanese crisis. I believe the Iranian Foreign Minister understood this vision and analysis of the regional situation." Finally, Minister Mottaki said they did not discuss Iranian influence on the stability

of the Middle East.

¶4. In the commentaries. While many of the commentaries focused on the UNSC resolution and provided recycled criticisms of Israel and the U.S. for perceived aggression and planning of the conflict, some commentators wrote about their reaction to the use of the term "Islamic fascism." One senior columnist in opposition daily Al-Wafd criticized President Bush's use of the term, predicting it "will cause more wars." As for the pro-government dailies, a columnist for Al-Akhbar argued that "fascism was never related to any religion ... and President Bush has shown discrimination and hostility toward Islam and Muslims." A columnist in government-controlled daily Rose al-Youssef criticized "President Bush's use of the term 'crusades' and now 'Islamic fascism.'" He likened "the American administration" to "Muslim extremists who seek to ignite strife with the west and Christians." However, in the same paper, another columnist blamed "instigating speeches of some religious and leftist powers who exploit the Israeli aggression and American support to nourish extremism." He concluded with a call for "an explanation of the objectives of the American and Israeli wars to the Egyptian public."

¶5. New developments. As announced over the weekend in Rose Al Youssef, Khayrallah Khayrallah, a Lebanese journalist for "Innahar" newspaper as well as former chief editor and founder of regional daily Al-Hayat, will regularly contribute articles to Rose al-Youssef. Mr. Khayrallah has spoken out publicly against Hezbollah. As reported in reftel, Mr. Khayrallah appeared on Egypt Television's popular evening talk-show, El Beit Beitak (Your Home) on August 6, during which he spoke against any need for Hezbollah to be armed and denied claims of Hezbollah's popularity among Lebanese.

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